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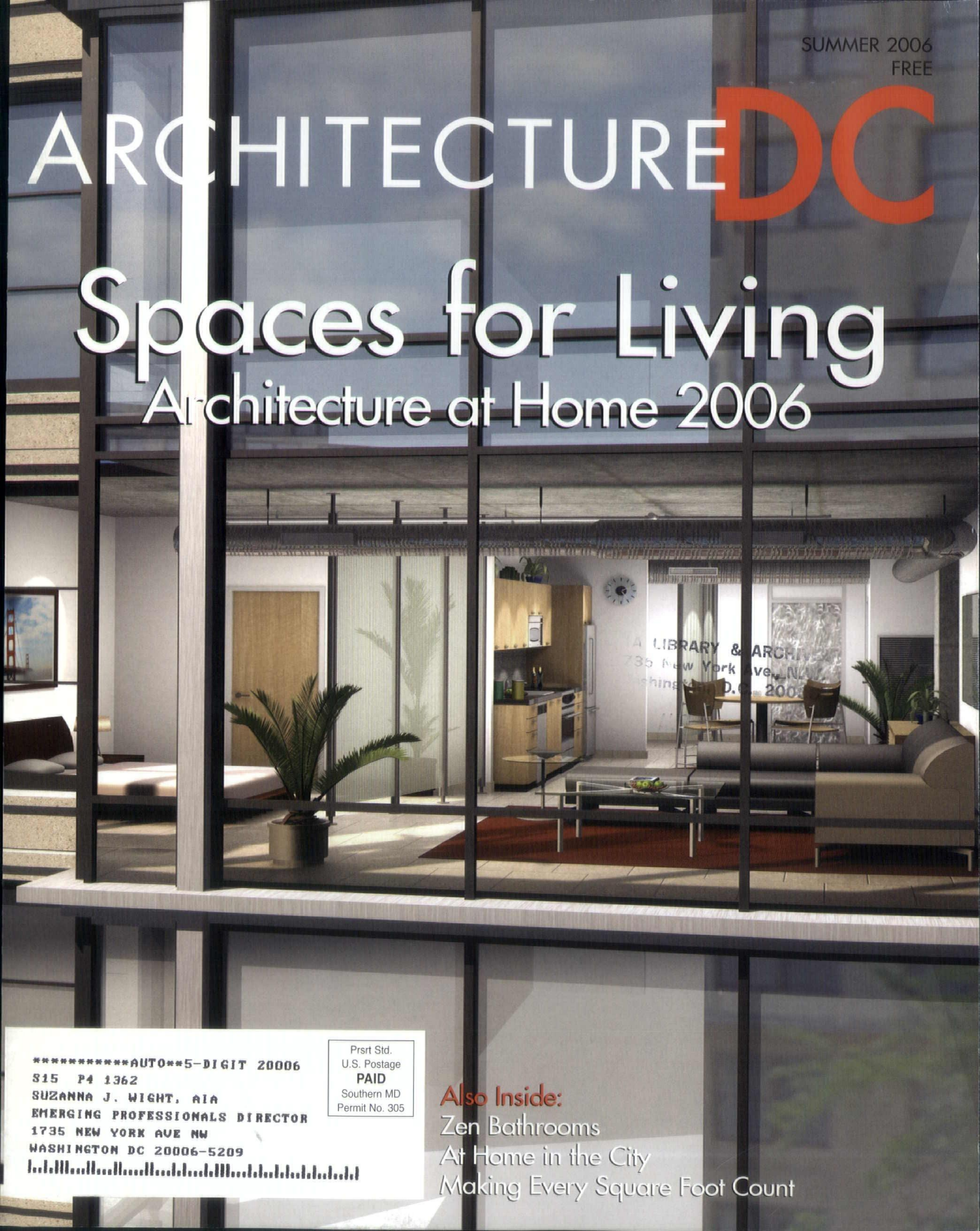

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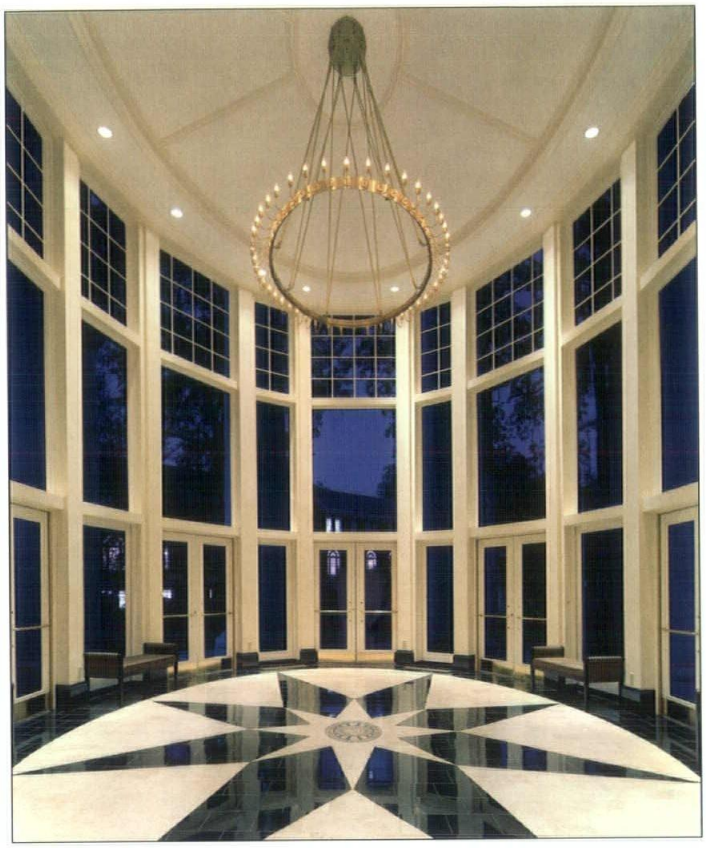

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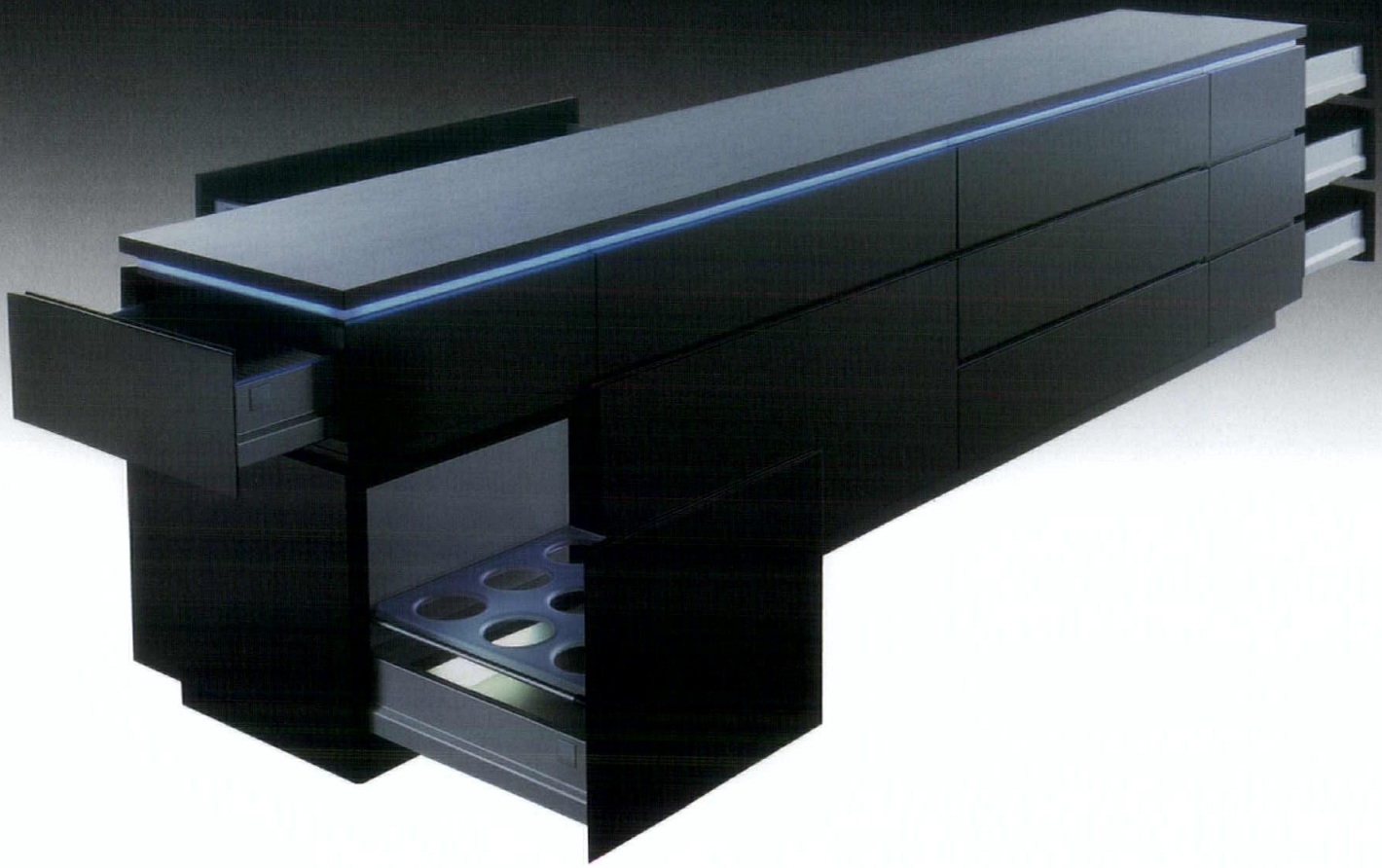

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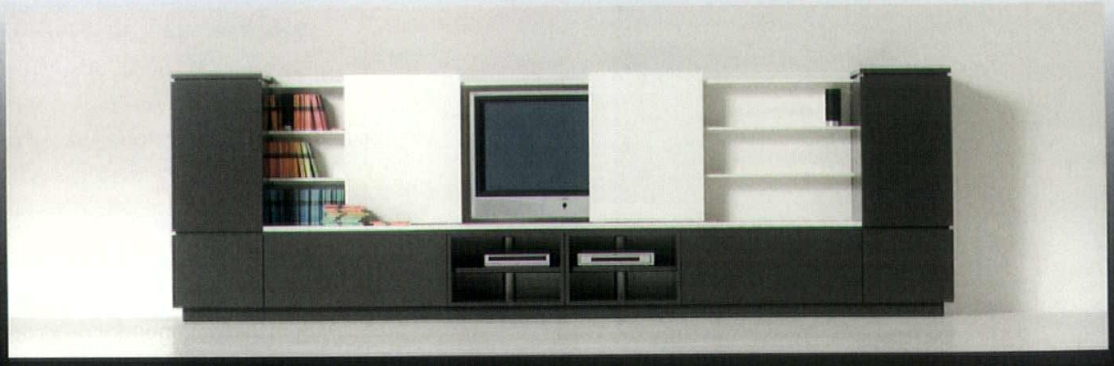

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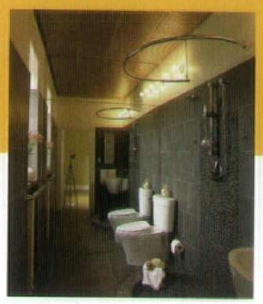

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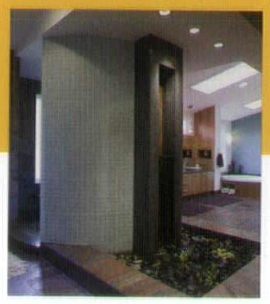

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Architecture by Cunningham + Quill Architects
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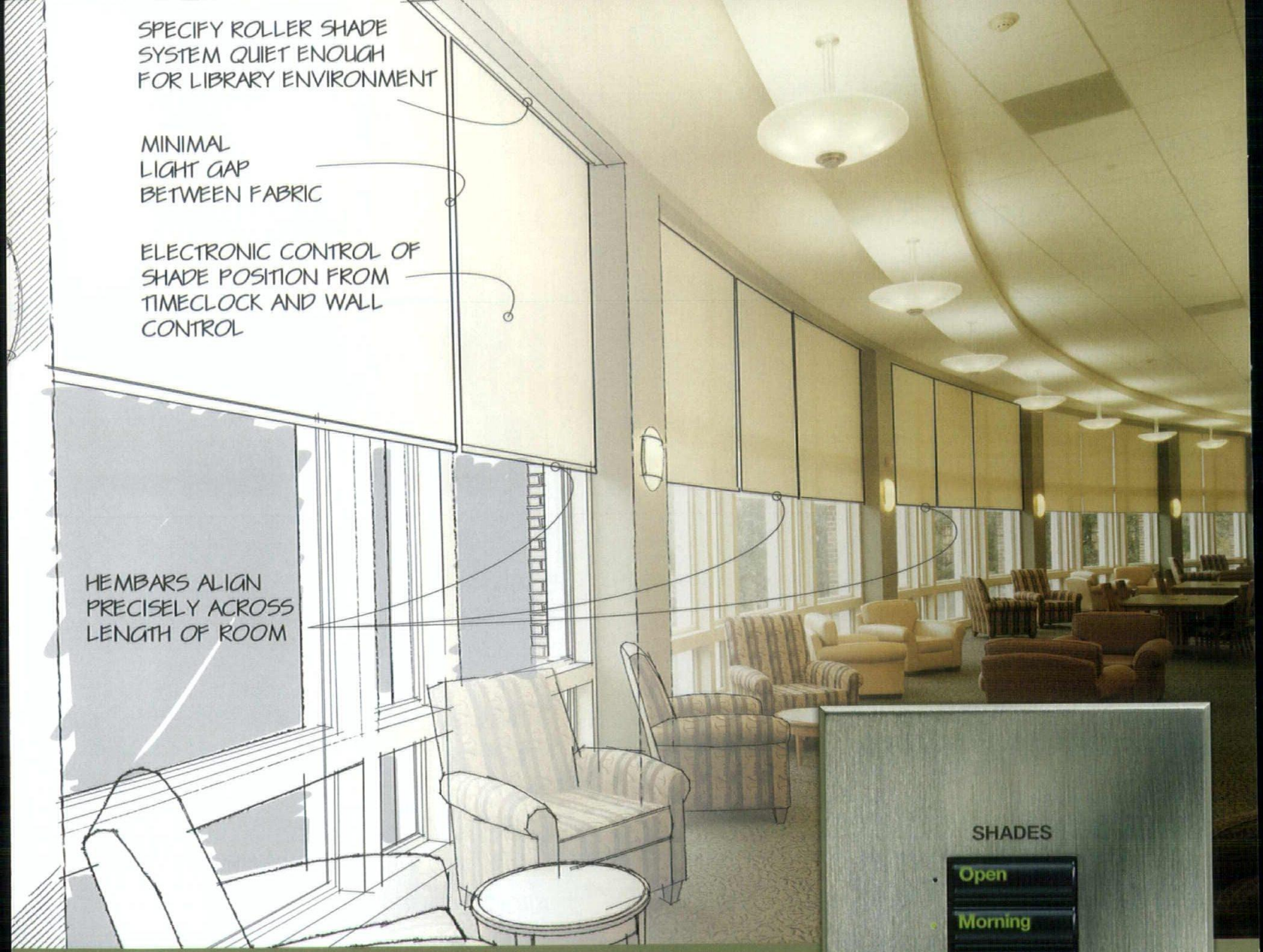

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Smaller Can Be Better

David Hamilton

The theme of our summer issue is residential architecture, and this year we are taking a special look at small living spaces. As interest rates begin to go up, the cost per square foot of living space continues in the opposite direction. Architects and developers are finding ways to make more with less, and in the process discovering that smaller is not only better, it sometimes yields more through the efficient use of space and innovative designs that make small spaces seem much bigger than they are.

Whenever homeowners in search of an architect come to the AIA | DC offices on Church Street to use our Architect Resource Center, I always make an effort to talk with them for a few minutes. Because I've been through the design and construction process myself, I like to say that "I speak client." The prospect of having a home designed and built may seem overwhelming, and many people feel embarrassed by what they don't know. We're here to help. Our Resource Center consists of dozens of portfolios of local architects; a complete list of our featured firms begins on page 46. The Resource Center, which is available to the public at not cost, is a great way to comparison shop before even speaking to an architect and an opportunity to ask the questions you may be reticent to ask an architect directly.

Welcome

One issue that homeowners struggle with is the amount of space they think they need. Encouraged by shelter magazines and conventional notions of space, many people assume that every function of everyday life needs a separate and discrete room: a breakfast room, a dining room, a living room, a family room, an office, a sitting room, a dressing room, a mud room. Many people later discover that living with (and furnishing) all these separate spaces is not ideal.

I like to relate the story of my home study. In our old apartment I had a spacious study in a converted bedroom with a bath and walk-in closet. I was forever rearranging the furniture trying to get the space to work for me. It never felt quite right even though it was probably 150 square feet with adequate light and built in storage. My study in our new home, where most of these columns are written, is no more that 60 square feet (no, that is not a typo), and sits smack in the middle of the second floor with no windows. Sounds tight, doesn't it? In reality, it's the perfect size. There is abundant natural light coming from both the front and back of the house, ample space to work, and a comfortable chair for reading. I'm extremely productive here, whereas in the old house, I was often distracted and constantly rearranging the room. I never would have thought such a small space would be so comfortable, or that it would allow me to indulge my workaholic tendencies at such odd hours—but that's another story. My study is a lot like a couture dress or bespoke suit—it's exactly right for me. And that is precisely why using an architect to develop a program of what you *really* need can be so vital.

With the escalating cost of real estate, everyone needs to get more house for the money. Hiring an architect can do that for you. Our architect came up with a great solution for my study because we talked a great deal about the type of space I needed and how I would use it. If you are contemplating a construction project, take the time to really think about what you need in your home. Go to our Web site at **www.aiadc.com/hireanarchitect** for helpful resources. Peruse the list of architects beginning on page 46, along with our new Member Marketplace advertising section, and think about visiting us to review their portfolios. We may be the American Institute of Architects—but we speak client.

Mary Fitch, AICP
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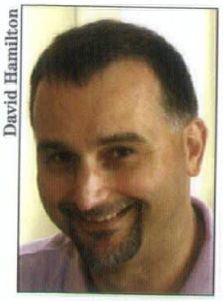
Summer Daze


David Hamilton

Summer brings us to our annual issue devoted to residential architecture, *Architecture at Home.* Though home renovations, home additions, and new homes are designed and built all year long, late spring/early summer still seems to be the time of year when most people—preoccupied the rest of the year with other responsibilities—begin thinking seriously about that new bathroom, new kitchen, new addition, or new home. So we have to confess that this issue is something of a tease; as your thoughts turn to how you might achieve your dream home, we offer a sample of what your neighbors in the DC metro area and their talented architects have been doing, and encourage you to connect with an AIA | DC architect who can make your own dreams come true.

Editor's Note

When we settled on the theme for our feature article by **Ron O'Rourke,** "Small Living Spaces: Making Every Square Foot Count," (page 12) we thought we were the first to spot this emerging local trend. Since then, I've read more articles on the topic in *The Washington Post* and other local rags then I care to count. While it may be hard to scoop the daily press with a quarterly magazine, at least we know we're in touch with the zeitgeist. And with the access we enjoy to the work of AIA | DC members, Ron's article brings to light some wonderful small homes and innovative, efficient designs you will not see anywhere else. In "Zen Bathing," (page 20) **Denise Liebowitz** takes a look at recent bathroom designs, many of which are taking on a decidedly eastern character. Not coincidentally, a common eastern design trait is the efficient use of space. Denise's article is a wonderful comparative analysis of three bathroom designs, from very small to very large.

In our regular Architecture Ahead feature, "At Home in the City," (page 36) **L. Catherine Hader** surveys three downtown condominium projects that are contributing to the changing face of the city, including one, The Alta (featured on our cover), that is surely a first in its rigorously efficient design aesthetic. There is nothing radical or even original about any particular element of this building. The breakthrough innovation is in how a downtown location, sustainable design, small unit sizes, open floor plans, and thoughtful use of materials are combined to deliver an entirely new living environment at a reasonable market price.

Finally, we introduce two new regular features with this issue. Our new Spotlight department, a two-page photo essay, allows us to share many more wonderful projects with you in a format that allows the work to speak for itself. Our first Spotlight theme, "Summer Evenings," (page 24) allows us to feature outstanding residential design in a different light, as it were: twilight. Our second new feature, Member Marketplace, is a special advertising section for AIA | DC members and corporate affiliates. If you are looking for outstanding architects, landscape architects, or other design consultants, you would do well to choose from among these fine firms.

Michael Tardif, Assoc. AIA, Hon. SDA
Editor

CONTRIBUTORS

L. Catherine Hader ("At Home in the City"), is a regular contributor to *ARCHITECTURE**DC***. In the past year, her contributions have included a Home$ense article on universal design (Winter 2005/2006), and two Architecture Ahead articles on the U.S. Capitol Visitor's Center (Fall 2005) and new urban spaces (Spring 2006). In her spare time, Catherine is director of marketing for **DMJM Design** in Arlington, where she was recently promoted to vice president.

Denise Liebowitz ("Zen Bathing: Eastern Influences in the 21st Century Home"), who retired in 2005 from the **National Capital Planning Commission,** is a frequent contributor and guest editor of *ARCHITECTURE**DC*** who has written many feature articles about our city's finest architecture. Denise will once again take up the red pen as guest editor of the Fall 2006 issue, so that editor Michael Tardif can finish two long-overdue book manuscripts.

George T. Myers, AIA ("Remodeling Your Home: Tips for Success"), the founder of GTM Architects in Bethesda, Maryland, is a first-time contributor to *ARCHITECTURE**DC***. George is an architect who practices what he preaches. Of the two homes that illustrate the renovation/remodeling concepts that he explains in his article, one is his own home in Kensington, Maryland.

Ronald O'Rourke ("Small Living Spaces: Making Every Square Foot Count"), who writes frequently for *ARCHITECTURE**DC***, in this issue continues the exploration of innovative residential design concepts that he began with an article in the Winter 2005 issue about post-Hurricane Katrina housing. Ron, who also designs our cover, conceived each topic in addition to writing about them.

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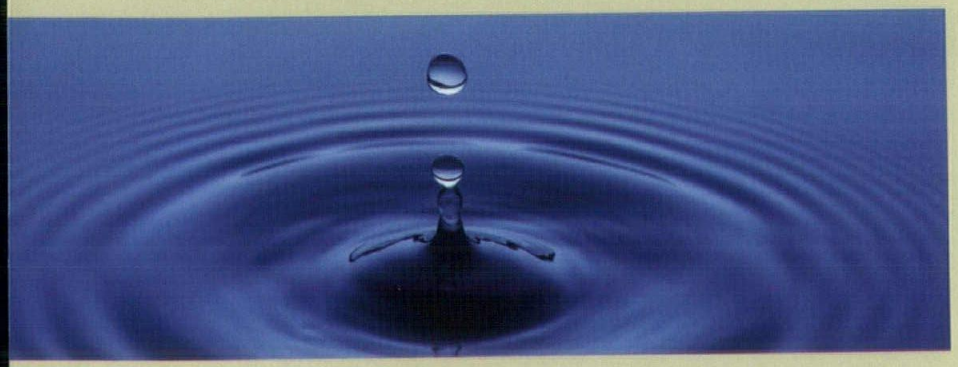

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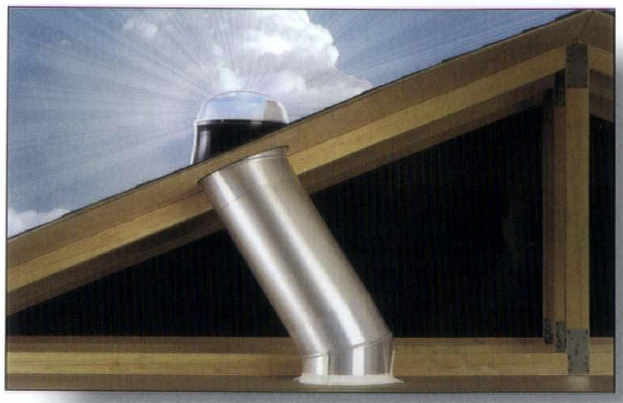
DetailsDC

Cross MacKenzie Gallery • Future Green • Skynear & Company

by Mary Fitch

All fired up. Noted local artist Rebecca Cross (she did the murals at Bethesda's Thyme Square Restaurant) has put her own work on hold to open a gallery that displays how varied and eclectic ceramic art can really be. The gallery, located just across the courtyard from the venerable Sea Catch Restaurant at Georgetown's Canal Square, features both local and national artists and shows that ceramic art can be both sculptural and functional. **Cross Mackenzie Gallery** features thematic group shows as well as a permanent collection of more functional items that can make the perfect wedding or hostess gift. Shown here is a piece called Ebb3 by Providence, Rhode Island artist Jason Green ($1200) from the current exhibition called *Architectural Ceramics*. Opened just this March, the gallery is a labor of love for Cross and her architectural photographer husband, Max Mackenzie. "There are really some amazing surfaces in clay," says Cross, "and I really felt I could elevate local artists by showing them next to some of the these national-level artists." *Architectural Ceramics* opened May 19 and continues through June 13. Visit the Cross MacKenzie Gallery at 1054 31st Street, NW, 202-333-7970, or **www.crossmackenzieceramicarts.com.**



Going green just got easier. The unbelievable array of products in Logan Circle's new **Future Green** would take up several pages of this magazine. Rather than give you a laundry list of the products, from organic bath salts to eco-friendly roof tiles, get yourself over there—preferably by public transportation—and take it all in. Lisa Sim and Keith Ware, the extremely knowledgeable proprietors, have a collection that includes building products, clothing, bedding, and even chocolate, all of which can make your life and your home greener. Something that caught our eye is Solatube, a tiny skylight that can bring natural light into nearly any room in your home. This 14-inch diameter flexible tube extends from the roof down through the attic to the ceiling of a room. The light travels through a highly reflective cylinder which enhances the quality of the light so that even on a partly cloudy day, you may not need to turn the lights on at all. The 14-inch Solatube can easily illuminate 250 square feet—the same amount of square footage as a standard three-tube florescent fixture—and costs only $250. Future Green is the only Washington distributor of Solatube. Visit Future Green at 1469 Church Street, NW, 202-234-7110, or **www.futuregreen.net.**

Not to be overlooked. With all the buzz about U Street and the rebounding of 14th Street, it might be easy to forget that one of Washington's most unique home furnishing stores still lives in the heart of the Adams Morgan nightclub district. **Skynear** opened in 1988 on 18th Street and continues to thrive. Its owner, Lynn Skynear, chose Adams Morgan because she found it to be the only truly international neighborhood in Washington. Covering four levels of a townhouse, and exclusively representing some of the world's most innovative furniture designers and manufacturers, the retail space is actually just the tip Skynear's design iceberg. "We've done so many clubs and restaurants in Adams Morgan," notes manager Cecil King, "Anzu, Saki, Chloe, Spy Lounge, just to name a few." Owner Skynear says along with her store's strong design sense, she takes pride in not only show cutting edge design but offering it at affordable prices. "My philosophy is that you can walk in the door and find something appealing whether you're just starting out or an established home owner." Shown here in black and white is the Tribeca sectional, with a starting price of $1995. Designed in Sweden by a company called Lyn, this sectional includes 19 different pieces that can be ordered in a variety of different colors and textiles to harmonize with environments both minimal and elaborate. "We think a modern mix is the trend right now," notes King. "People want some classic modern pieces but with a more comfortable feel." Visit Skynear at 2122 18th Street, NW, **202-797-7160.**

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Small Living Spaces:

Making Every Square Foot Count

by Ronald O'Rourke

With the cost of DC-area living space soaring—some condos in the city are going for more than $500 a square foot—making the most of limited living space is becoming more important than ever. ArchitectureDC set out to learn whether the constraints of cost and space were producing any local innovations in residential design. We discovered a number of local architects who saw the potential of small spaces that others may have overlooked and who took advantage of the opportunity to design homes for themselves—or in one case, a client—that work better and feel bigger than other homes of the same size.

Room for Three in 510 Square Feet

After a few years of long distance dating between Philadelphia and DC, architects **Denise Juron-Borgese, AIA,** and **Antonino Borgese, AIA,** consolidated their separate households into a 510-square-foot, one-bedroom condominium in DC's Kalorama neighborhood, which they now share with an infant son. Denise and Antonino quickly concluded that their home needed updating to make it more functional. Their primary goal was to add both storage space and work surfaces.

With only three rooms, including a bedroom and a bathroom, the one remaining room serves as a combined kitchen, dining room, and living room—the "social room," as Denise and Antonio call it. When they moved in, this room had little counter space, no dishwasher, and a poorly designed pantry. They tore out the pantry and the existing cabinets, and replaced them with new beech cabinets and granite countertops, more than doubling the available counter space. In place of full-height upper cabinets, open shelves immediately above the counters permit easy access to small appliances and other cooking supplies, freeing up valuable work space. Shorter-than-usual upper cabinets provide additional storage above the shelves, while under-counter refrigerators doubled the amount of food storage space without the bulk of a full-size refrigerator. A new 20-inch-wide gas range replaced an old one, which left enough room for an 18-inch wide dishwater. These smaller-than-usual appliances liberated an additional 16 inches of under counter cabinet space. Denise and Antonino also extended an existing soffit by mounting cabinets with translucent doors flush to the ceiling, which can be reached with a small collapsible step ladder.

In the bedroom, Denise and Antonino removed half of the existing closet and converted the other half into general-use corridor storage. They replaced the lost bedroom storage with tall, wall-to-wall beech wardrobes that more than doubled their bedroom closet space, using mirrored doors and a light cove above to create the illusion of greater space. The bedroom also accommodates a small home office.

"Architects have the ability to envision and organize space in three dimensions, which is so vital when every square foot counts," Juron-Borgese said. "In a small living space, a continuity of quality finishes is important. For example, we were consistent with beech cabinetry throughout. A palette of vibrant, complementary colors also dynamically unifies the space."

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Antonino Borgese

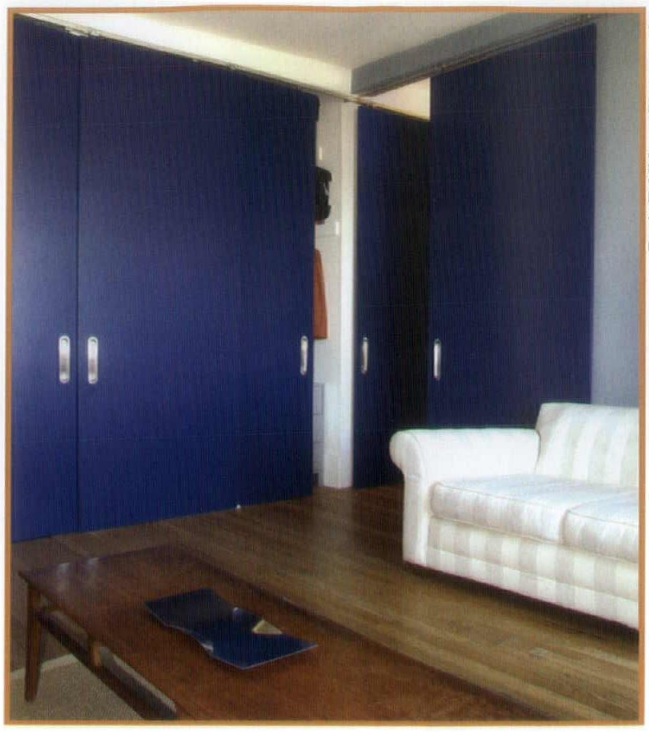
Making the Most of High Ceilings and Color

When **Janet Bloomberg, AIA,** a principal of **KUBE Architecture,** moved into her 750-square-foot co-op apartment in the District, she found that the previous owners had taken out most of the original interior walls. The unit needed a new kitchen, a new bathroom, electrical work, new lighting and plumbing, and refinished floors. KUBE sought to fix all these problems on a tight budget and leave the space open while also creating as much storage space as possible.

KUBE designed new sliding doors made of inexpensive medium-density fiberboard (MDF) that are used to close off storage space. "The new sliding doors run floor to ceiling, so they appear more as sliding walls than doors," Bloomberg said. "In this way, they do not compete with the existing, more-ornate doors."

Bloomberg used inexpensive Ikea cabinets in the kitchen. "I used the extra wood that Ikea provided [with the cabinets] to create a custom desk area adjacent to the kitchen. This area is for doing work while I'm cooking, and it matches the rest of the kitchen, so it feels like part of the room."

Color was another important element of the design. "We used two paint colors—a pale green and charcoal—as design features. The walls parallel with the window wall are painted pale green, while the short end walls are painted charcoal. No matter which direction one looks, the two colors are always featured in the view." The charcoal is a receding color; by using it on the shorter end walls, KUBE visually lengthened the room, while a reflective, brilliant blue glass tile in the bathroom enriches and enlarges the small space.

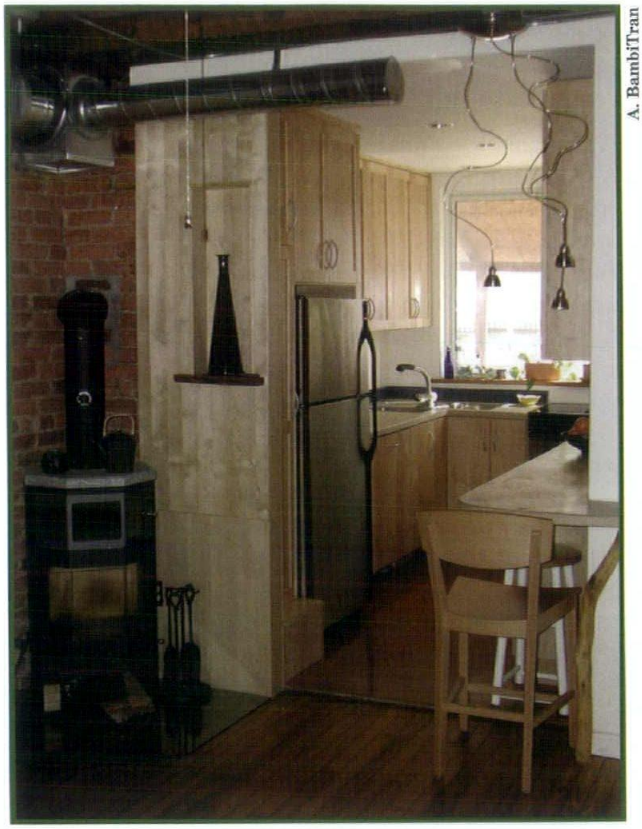


Boris Feldblyum Photography

For Bloomberg, the design shows that taller ceilings can allow for wonderful storage opportunities, and that clever use of paint can greatly enhance the sense of space in a small room. "Architects typically have the expertise to design efficiency and cohesion into a small space," she noted. "They think of the project as a unified whole, rather than as a collection of separate parts, which is critical for small homes."

Boris Feldblyum Photography

A. BambiTran



A. BambiTran

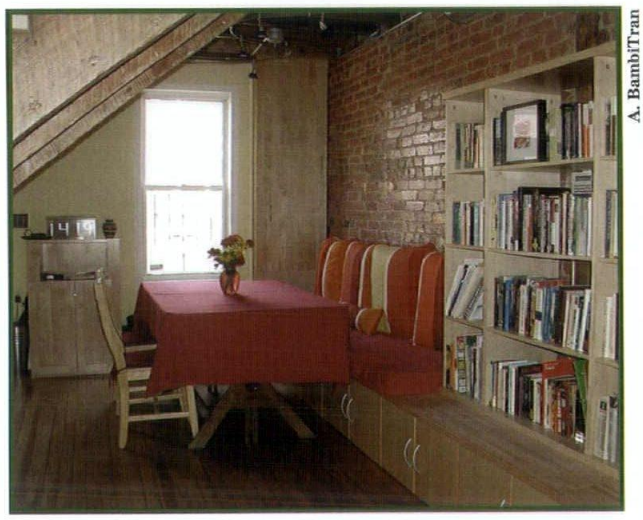
Designing With Light

For intern architect **A. Bambi Tran, Assoc. AIA, LEED®AP,** and her partner, **Karen Rowan,** a building contractor, their 1,100-square-foot, two-story DC row house was an opportunity to integrate function, aesthetics, and sustainability, issues that inform and inspire their professional work. They realized that by changing the layout and bringing in more light, they could create comfortable multi-use spaces that would make the most of the limited square footage.

On the main floor, Tran and Rowan removed interior walls to create a large open space with an uninterrupted view from the front to the back of the house. In the kitchen, a narrow south-facing door leading to the rear yard was replaced with a large, energy-efficient window, while a rear-facing window in the living room was replaced with a door. All new exterior doors have full-light designs, while a random pattern of colored glass blocks in the walls of the stairwell and floor of the second-floor bathroom allow filtered light from a skylight above to reach the first floor.

The elimination of the original exterior door allowed the kitchen to be reconfigured to add much-needed counter space. To keep the kitchen from feeling too small, Tran selected light-colored cabinets and dark-colored cork flooring. A concrete countertop wraps around the room and extends into the living area just enough to create an eat-in space for two while visually lengthening the kitchen. The stair landing was changed to redirect traffic flow and reduce circulation through the living space, while built-in seating and shelves serve as both furniture and storage.

"Throughout the house, finishes on the surfaces and furniture were kept simple and light, so as to create a more uniform style that decreases the sense of clutter," Tran says. "The focus was on devising multiple uses for each space. For example, an antique drafting table serves as both the dining room table and, when the table cloth is removed, as a craft area," she adds. "In the end, the space constraints were more of a creative challenge than a shortcoming of the project."



A. BambiTran

Sculpting in Space

The owners of an 1,100-square-foot detached house in the District were unhappy with the wasted space on their main living level. They wanted a more open and unified series of spaces, and as much storage space as possible. To accomplish their goals within a limited budget, they turned to **KUBE Architecture.**

KUBE found a house divided in the middle by closets and a staircase enclosed by walls, which made the house feel small and dark. And although the property has a nice

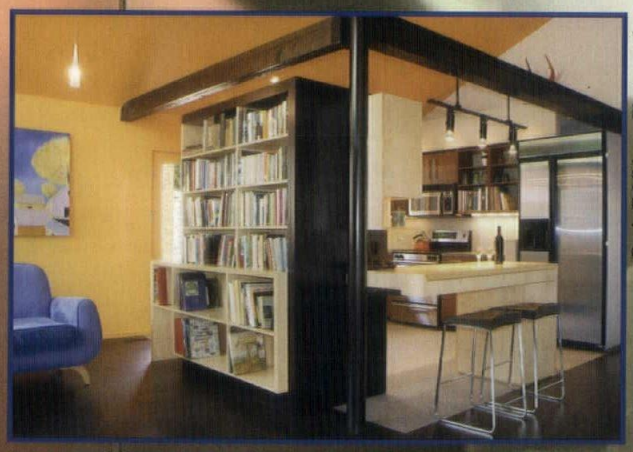
Boris Feldblyum Photography

rear yard and deck, there was no view to these outdoor spaces from the main living spaces in the front of the house. KUBE removed the interior closets and stair, completely opening the house from front to back. An unusual open stair replaced the conventional enclosed one.

"The new stair we designed for the space is solid at the bottom for the first few steps, but then becomes a light, open-riser stair that is divided from the dining room with only a plastic translucent screen," said KUBE architect **Richard Loosle-Ortega.** "This allows light to penetrate through all spaces of the house." Storage drawers were built into the lower, solid portion of the stair, and one of the upper stair treads pierces the screen to become a display shelf in the dining room, "allowing the stair to act both functionally and sculpturally," he added.

The screen used on the stair is one of a series that KUBE incorporated into the design. The sequence begins with an exterior steel-and-cedar screen and entry gate, continues with a steel-and-plastic screen between the entry and dining areas, and ends with the screen between the stair and the dining room. Dark bamboo flooring complements the steel frames and exposed steel structure.

KUBE's design also includes a reorientation of the entry and dining room areas, and built-in cabinetry on almost every perimeter wall that provides "a great deal of new storage that feels tied into the design of the spaces," noted Loosle-Ortega. The second floor of the house extends over only a portion of the first floor, which allows the kitchen, dining room, and family room to have a cathedral ceiling. Wood roof framing and steel columns are left exposed and stained with a dark finish to stand out against the colorful painted surfaces of the cathedral ceiling, and help define the kitchen and stair as sculptural elements in a single large space.



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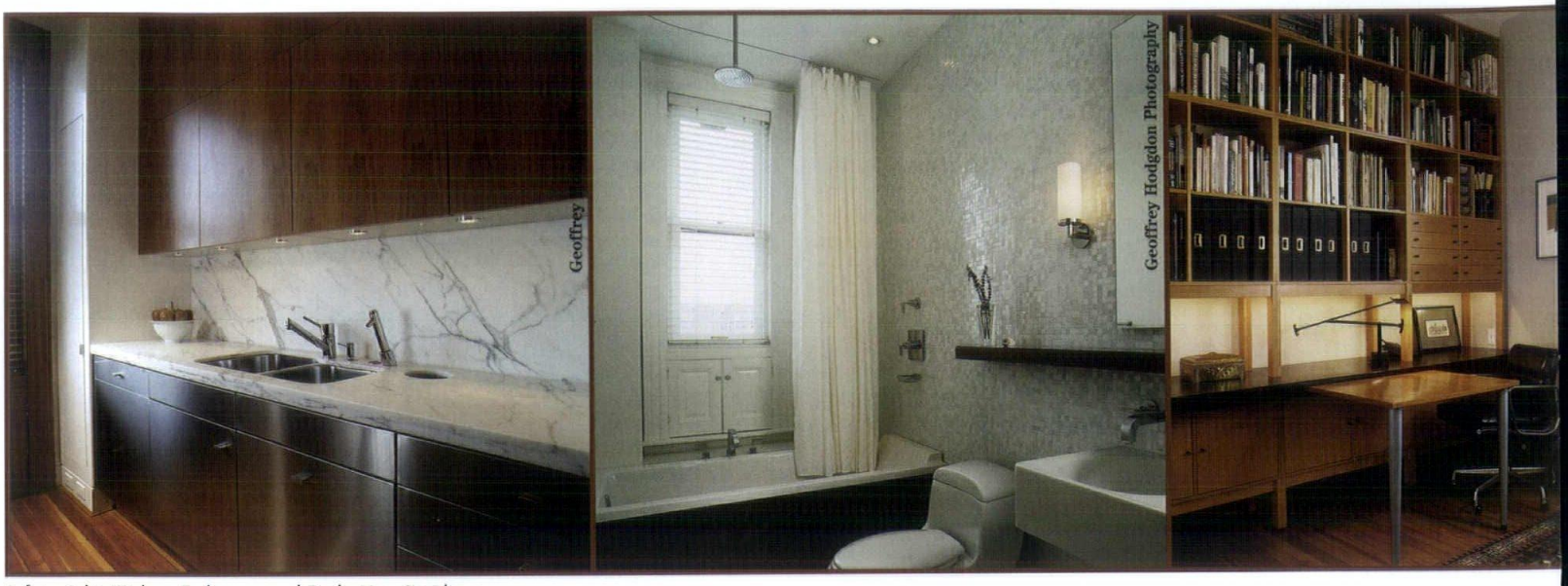


Left to right: Kitchen, Bathroom, and Study, Hoss Residence.

Integrating the Old with the New

For a 1,300-square-foot, two-bedroom co-op apartment in the Mendota, one of DC's earliest apartment houses, **Gregory M. Hoss, AIA,** of **David M. Schwarz/ Architectural Services, Inc.,** designed a renovation that kept the original room arrangement intact and returned the unit to its former glory while modernizing the kitchen and bath and adding storage. The apartment has "wonderful views overlooking Rock Creek Park and the National Cathedral," Hoss said. "However, the kitchen and bathroom had been poorly renovated in the 50s, and the apartment lacked sufficient storage. No rooms were actually changing size, so the effort was geared toward making each room as beautiful and functionally efficient as possible." After restoring many of the apartment's original details, "we then inserted a series of new elements—kitchen bath, and storage. These insertions were designed to look new within the envelope of the existing space, yet were carried out using timeless materials and details that easily coexist with and complement the [building's] 1903 aesthetic."

Hoss redesigned the galley kitchen so that it could accommodate two cooks preparing dinner for 12 guests—a requirement that a lot of larger kitchens might not meet. The design includes custom-built closets, pull-out pantries, and built-in bookshelves to maximize flexible storage space while also permitting generous counter areas.

Bathrooms in older apartment buildings are often modest in size, so Hoss focused on making the bathroom seem larger. Minimalist-yet-classic porcelain fixtures are arranged along a wall of glass tile, and large (24-inch) white terrazzo-glass tiles create a monochromatic floor. The shower curtain is hung from a hospital curtain track recessed into the 10-foot-high ceiling. This simple yet unconventional installation is paired with a rainforest shower head to create a surprisingly wonderful showering experience, and when the curtain is pulled back, there is no visible shower rod to interrupt the room.

The apartment's second bedroom/study and three of the apartment's closets were fitted with a series of custom, built-in IKEA storage units that greatly increased storage space at relatively low cost.

"Too often, designers create spaces that appear stunning at first glance, but do not work well as living space," Hoss remarked. "The thoughtful configuration and creative articulation of space is really the answer to making any room—big or small—work successfully."

Expanding in Harmony

Joseph Wnuk, AIA, a principal of **Wnuk Spurlock Architecture,** and his partner, **Alex Oporto,** an architect with the U.S. State Department, felt hemmed in by their 1,600-foot, two-story, Victorian-style townhouse near DC's Logan Circle. "The combination of high ceilings, the house's narrowness, and separately functioning formal rooms all contributed to a claustrophobic and constricted feeling," according to Wnuk.

Initially, Wnuk and Oporto thought of adding a third level to gain a better master bedroom suite. Conversations with staff at the District's Historic Preservation Office, however, led them to reconsider, and they settled on an alternative approach of lowering the basement floor to achieve an 8-foot ceiling height on that level, and adding living space in the back to expand the house to about 2,000 square feet. Wnuk and Oporto's design strategy for the renovation was straightforward: "We simplified. We removed many of the interior walls to expand the space and used furniture to define living areas," said Wnuk. "This is particularly effective in the one-room living-dining area, which replaces three rooms and a hall."

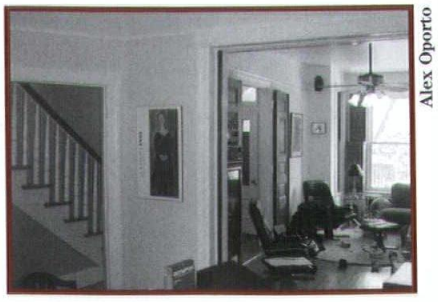
Interior features that could act as visual distractions were removed. "Then, anything we added was simpler, with more refined, less conspicuous trim," explained

Geoffrey Hodgdon Photography

Alex Oporto

Alex Oporto

Alex Oporto



Alex Oporto

Above, top to bottom: Wnuk/Oporto Living/ Dining Room, before (above) and after (top).

Wnuk. "Some elements visually slide across other elements and look as though they are being opened for view. The living room fireplace is a good example of this, with horizontal panels that seem to slide across the existing fireplace chimney." The sliding illusion was also used in a dining area cabinet and a new etched glass partition along the stair.

Identical or continuous finishes were used throughout the project to maintain simplicity and improve cohesiveness. "In general, we attempted to conceal anything that would visually distract from the space. We concealed all ductwork, light fixture tracks, and audio systems behind wall surfaces. To simplify the spaces further, we used a white or neutral palette. This allowed light to reflect further into the house and create the feeling of greater space. We also used some reflective surfaces, such as the etched glass panels at the stair and the kitchen backsplashes, and glass tiles in the bathroom, to bounce and redirect daylight further into rooms."

Simplicity in planning, shape, and color allow the interior to read as a single, complete, and seemingly larger whole. "In urban areas, it seems that space continues to be a trend or desire, but cost and location are forcing clients to find ways to maximize available space," Wnuk said. "We have to make do with less." In addressing this challenge, Wnuk noted that "most architects see the design problems in totality and not as a series of small projects. This [broad overview results in] the continuity that is necessary to make small spaces seem larger and to make multiple or overlapping uses of space."

Alex Oporto

Kitchen, Wnuk/Oporto Residence, Logan Circle

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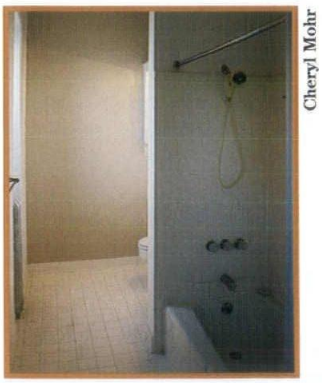
Cheryl Mohr

Zen Bathing:

Soothing Body and Soul

by Denise Liebowitz

The bathroom is probably the one room in the American home whose character has changed the most over the past 50 years. The antiseptic, clinically efficient room, once part of a home's common family space, has gradually morphed into a private retreat of sensual pleasure and relaxation, a personal haven of peace and ritual purification. The kitchen may be the focus of much design attention, but no room is expected to combine beauty and functionality like the 21st century bathroom. It must indulge the senses, soothe the spirit, and celebrate the body.

Americans are new to the phenomenon. Eastern cultures, in particular, have deeply rooted traditions that elevate daily bathing to a social ritual. With the exception of the outdoor hot tub, the communal aspects of eastern bathing traditions are notably missing from our culture, but eastern influences in the design of our bathing places are unmistakable.

At their best, these Eastern-inspired spaces are modern, minimal, and clutter-free. They are tranquil spaces that use simple, organic materials to make a connection to the natural world. Three local architects demonstrate how these Zen-like qualities can be achieved in spaces of any size, from tiny bathrooms tucked into modest downtown apartments, to luxurious spa-like enviroments in spacious suburban homes.

Less is Mohr

In a 1930's Dupont Circle apartment, **Cheryl Mohr, AIA,** of **Gardner Mohr Architects LLC,** has created an elegant, spacious, and functional bathroom in just 55 square feet. Mohr wanted the small, traditional, one-person bathroom to have the illusion of greater space. "I wanted to make the bathroom functional for two people," said Mohr. She placed an oval shower between the sink and the toilet on a single, uninterrupted wall, with only the curb of the shower separating it from the rest of the room. A shower curtain will hang on an oval steel rod suspended from the ceiling. When partially drawn, the curtain will serve as a privacy screen, and when it is open the bathroom will feel more expansive. White porcelain fixtures provide a bright contrast with the dark tile floor and wall surfaces. The shower itself is subtly defined by a grouted black pebble floor that rises up the wall to provide a backdrop for the shower faucet and wall-mounted shower head.

The wall opposite the entry door is completely covered with a frameless mirror, visually doubling the size and changing the apparent proportions of the 10-foot high room. "The 10-foot ceilings could have made the tiny room feel cavernous, so we softened the effect by covering the ceiling in wood," noted Mohr. Using the parts of an inexpensive some-assembly-required Ikea bench, Mohr simply screwed the wooden slats to the ceiling to create a spa/sauna-like effect. The light fixtures—hardware store "keyless" porcelain lamp holders ($1.79 each)—are another low-cost but elegant solution.

"One of the design ideas I have been playing with is integrating the wet and dry areas of the traditional bathroom," said Mohr. "Bathrooms in Japanese homes, for example, frequently combine shower and bath functions in a common wet area, which is minimally separated from the rest of the bathroom. All functions share the same circulation area and the bathroom feels more spacious." Mohr's palette of warm wood, black tile, mirrored glass, and white porcelain, with minimal separation and detail, combine to create a harmonious, spacious, and functional whole in a miniscule space.

Beyond the Fall

In Potomac, Maryland, **Christopher Landis, AIA,** principal of the design/build firm Landis Construction Corporation, has created an outsized, amenity-rich bath as part of a home renovation and addition. Landis added about 400 square feet to a master bedroom suite consisting of a bedroom, bathroom, and office that encompasses nearly 1,000 square feet. "The clients wanted something different," said Landis. "[Sharon Janda] is Asian, a clothes designer, and has a great eye. This was definitely a Zen opportunity."

The bedroom flows directly into the bath area, which is defined by a dramatic shower and waterfall installation. The transition between the rooms is marked only by a single step, a dropped beam, and a change in floor finish from wood to tile. A curved wall of glass mosaic tile faces

Cheryl Mohr

Alan Karchmer Photography

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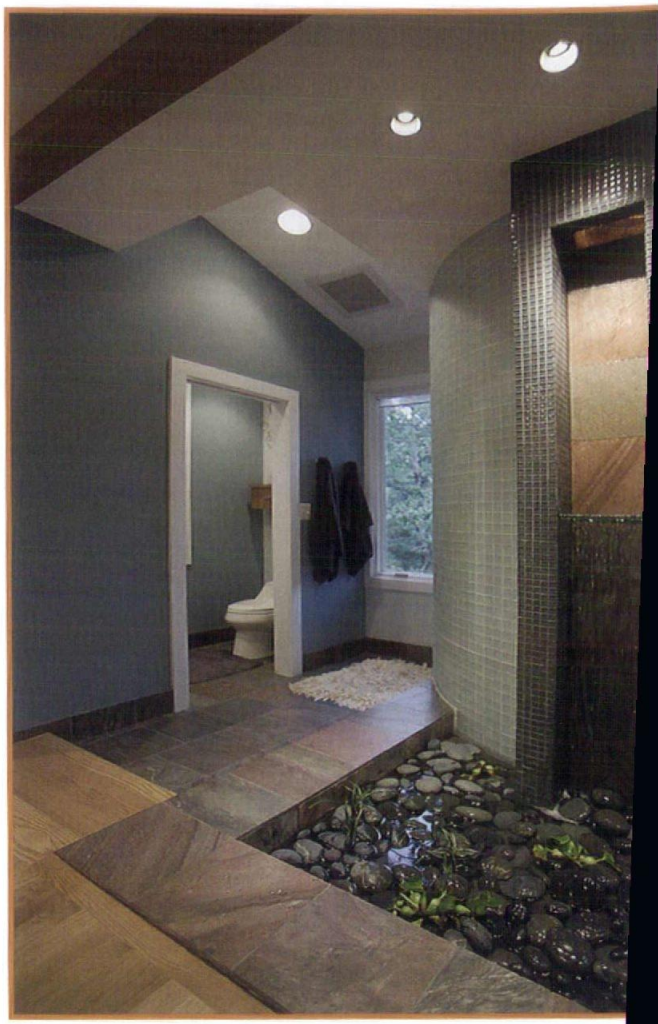


the bedroom, punctuated by a waterfall defined by black ceramic tile that courses into a pool of washed pebbles. The curved wall encloses a spa-like shower with a floor of washed river stone that is illuminated by a large frosted-glass window and tiny, star-like recessed ceiling lights. The vanity/tub area features custom cherry millwork and two large skylights. Separate toilet rooms have become standard in large bathroom suites, but all too often they are small, windowless spaces. Landis placed the toilet room in an outside corner of the suite beyond the shower and opening directly into the shower area just off the bedroom, ensuring privacy while allowing this space to have a large window.

"We didn't want heavy Asian, but something that was clean and contemporary Asian," says Landis' client Sharon Janda. "We were looking for a relaxing spa-like environment. We did a lot of brainstorming with Chris and when it came to the water feature, I knew if we did something dramatic, I wanted to be able to enjoy it from the bedroom." Janda says that in spite of the open plan of the bedroom and bath, the customized lighting in the shower and vanity areas allows her early-rising husband to get ready for work without disturbing her.

Left, top to bottom: exterior and interior of new master bathroom, Dupont Circle, by KUBE Architecture.

Yerko Pallominy

Yerko Pallominy

Landis noted that many of his clients have found him through the Client Resource Center maintained by AIA | DC, as well as the firm directory on AIA | DC's Web site. "It's amazing to me how many member architects are not taking full advantage of this resource," said Landis. "The site is a great marketing tool, especially since so many clients in this area are technology savvy."

Bathed In Light

Nestled between Chris Landis' expansive bathing suite and Cheryl Mohr's small urban jewel is a 140-square-foot master bath that was part of a recent Dupont Circle row house renovation by **KUBE Architecture.** "We wanted to create a sense of continuity in this room and have one expansive space running straight through into the shower area," said KUBE principal Janet Bloomberg. The wet area of the bathroom, containing the tub and shower, is separated from the remainder of the bathroom only by a clear, frameless, nearly invisible floor-to-ceiling panel of glass. Otherwise, there are no conventional details—such as a curb or shower curtain—to separate the wet area from the remainder of the bathroom. The floor in the wet area slopes imperceptibly toward the front edge of the tub, where a narrow trough serves as the shower drain. In one expansive sweep the dark tile floor folds up to encase the tub. Here again, the integration of wet and dry areas, the continuity of materials, and the careful attention to horizontal lines combine to achieve a serene, Zen-like character, a restrained, eastern sensibility.

Pristine white porcelain fittings and wall tile contrast with a dark tile floor, while a cast concrete countertop and sink, the vanity cabinets, and a space-expanding mirrored wall of cabinets expand the sense of space with continuous and crisp horizontal lines. Retractable, motorized window coverings provide privacy and softly filter natural light. "To hold up in this humid bathroom environment, the shades are commercial grade," noted Bloomberg. A continuous row of insulated, double-paned windows that wrap around the two exterior walls of the wet area, mitered at the outside corner, ensure bathroom warmth and comfort while providing expansive rooftop views.

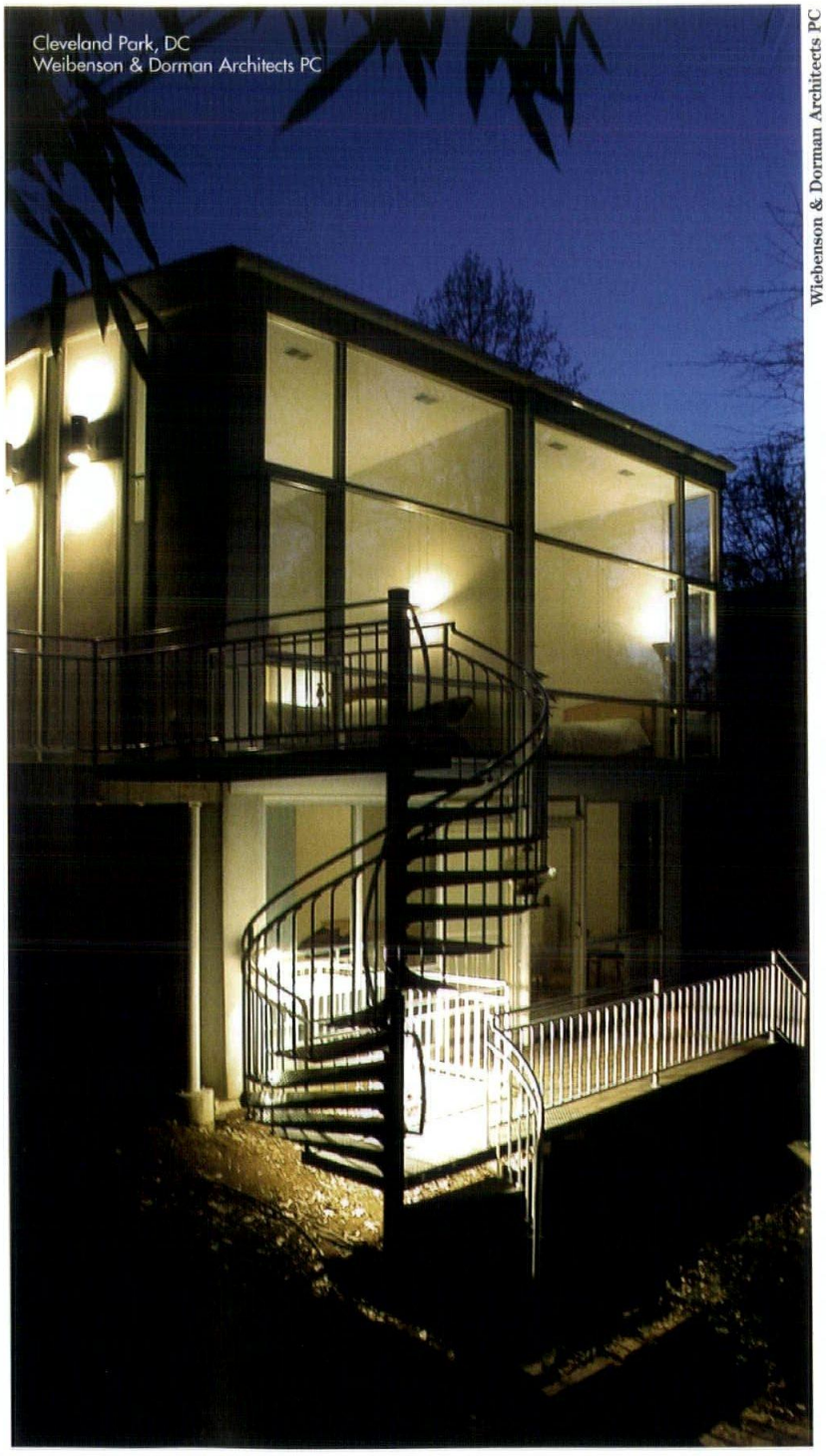
Whether large or small, these bathrooms offer a contemplative refuge from the frenetic outside world; they encourage personal time in quiet spaces; and they achieve aesthetic harmony through visual balance. While there is no denying the Zen influence, others would call it just good design.

Above, left to right: Janda Residence master bathroom by Landis Construction Corporation.

Spotlight: Summer Evenings

by Michael Tardif

The warm glow of home beckons as nature envelops us in the comforting cloak of twilight.



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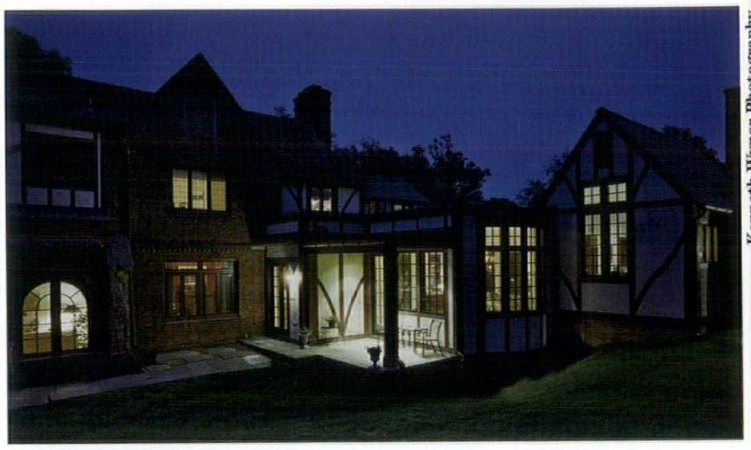

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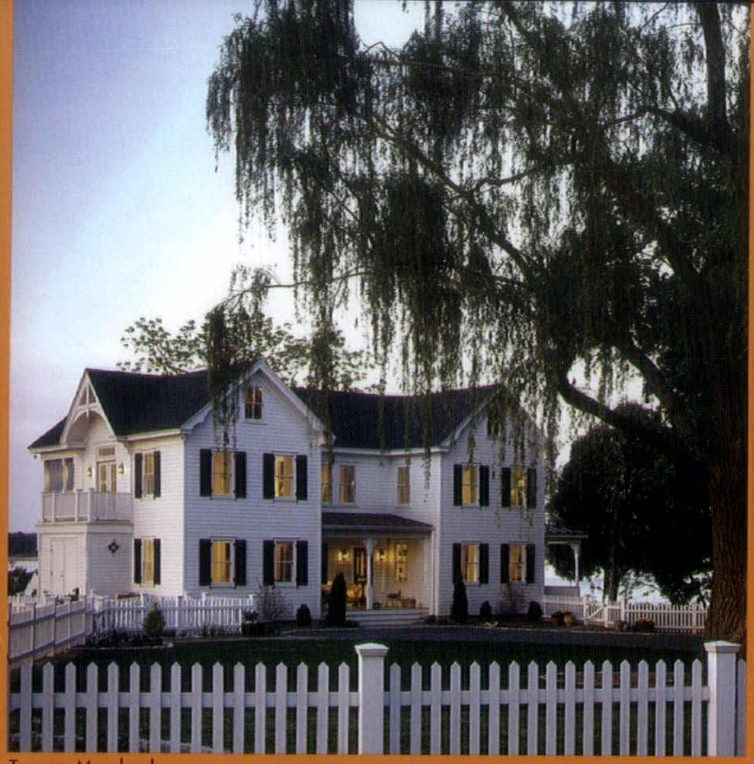

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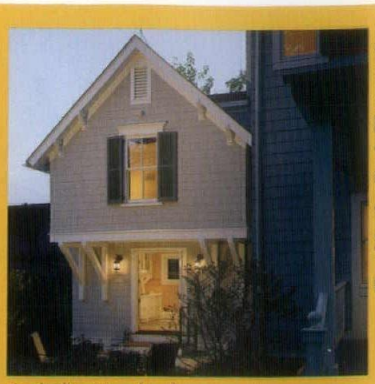

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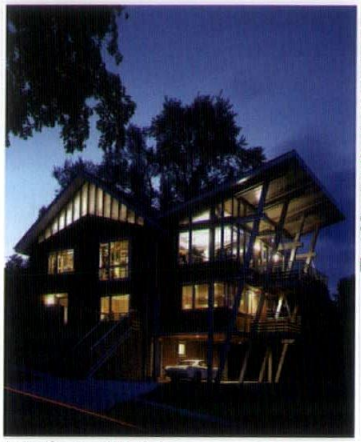

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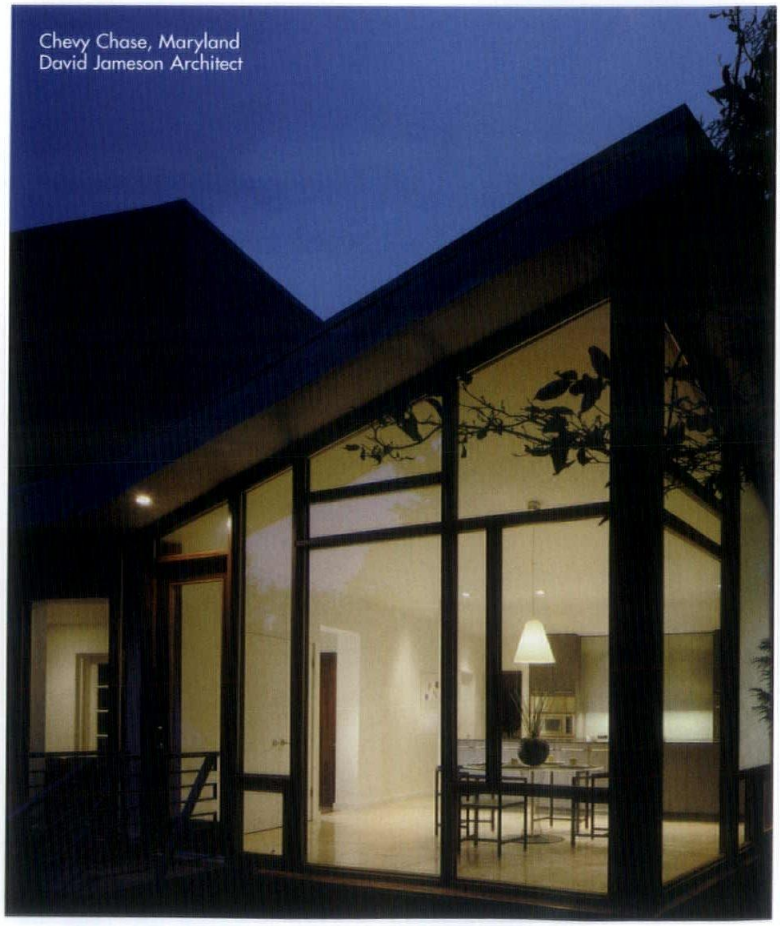

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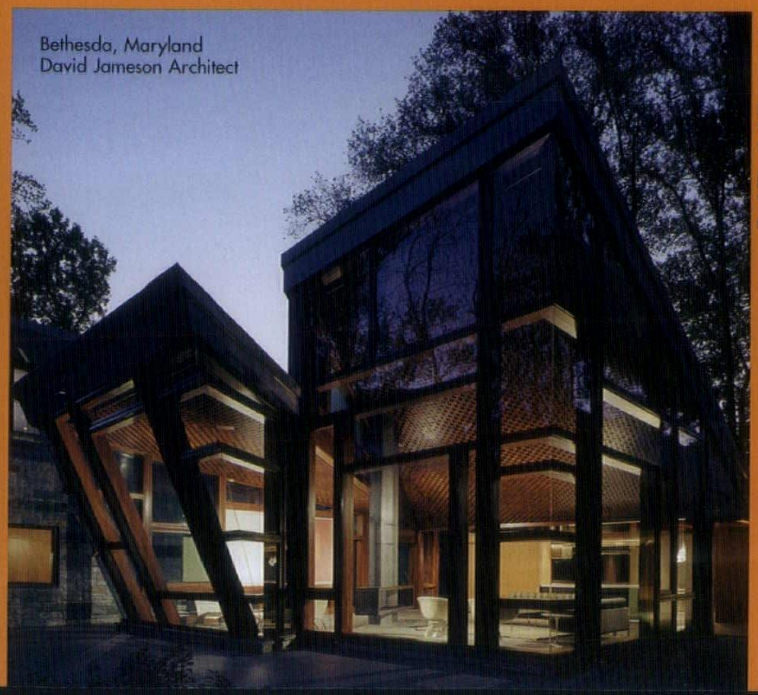

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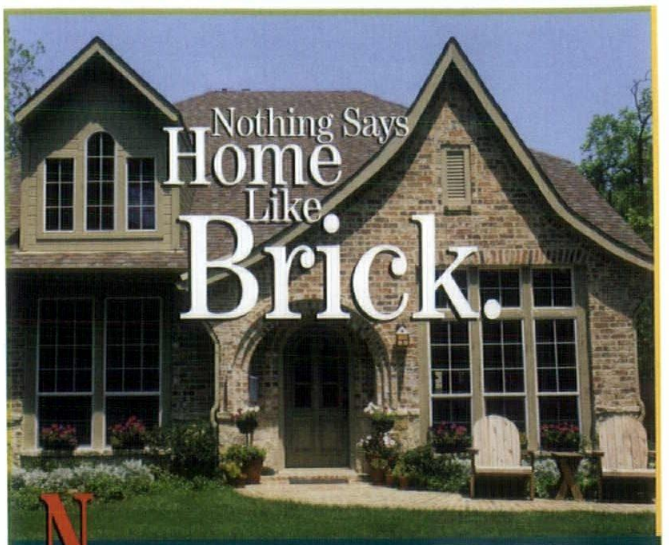

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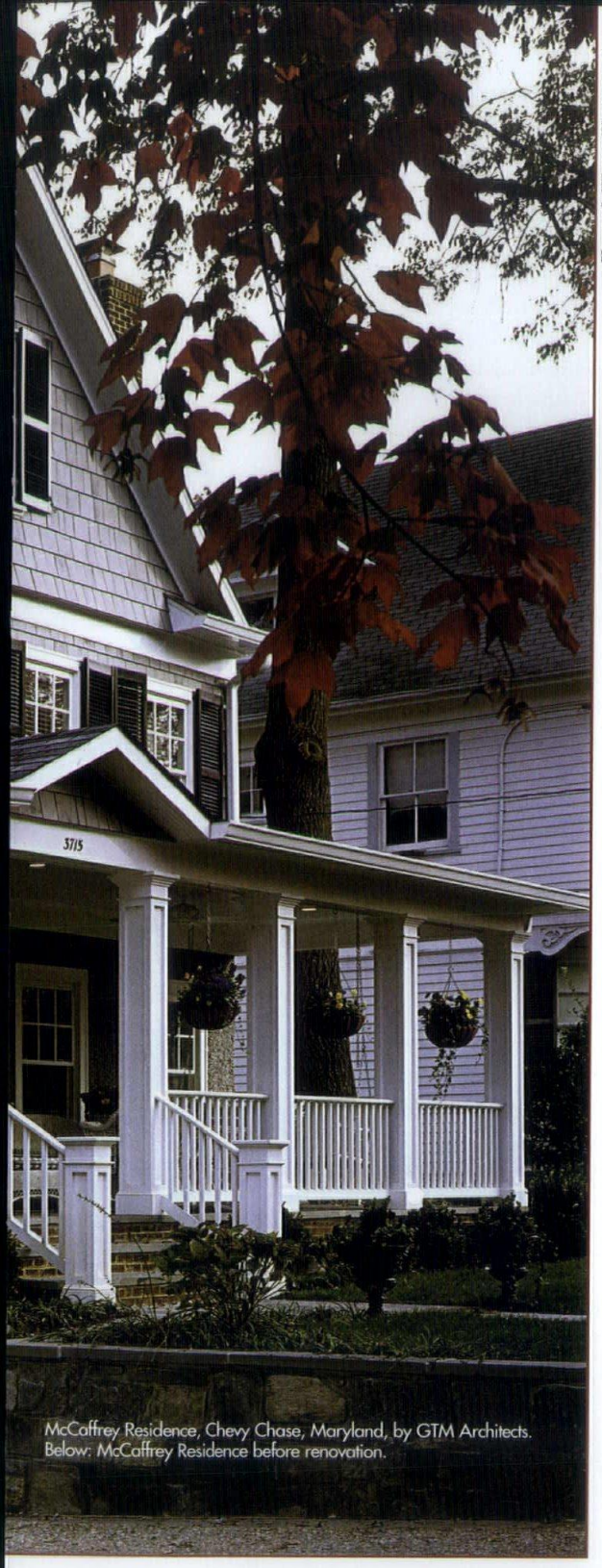
Remodeling Your Home: Tips for Success

by George Myers



Kenneth Wyner Photography

Kenneth Wyner Photography

McCaffrey Residence, Chevy Chase, Maryland, by GTM Architects.
Below: McCaffrey Residence before renovation.

GTM Architects

Like most homeowners, you probably have been thinking about making changes or improvements to your home from the moment you bought it. You have successfully tackled minor improvements, such as a fresh coat of paint, a new tile floor, or even a finished basement. But now you're eyeing your outdated kitchen or thinking about a major new addition: a master bedroom suite, a family room, or a home office. You and your family have simply outgrown the home in its current condition, but want to stay in the same location. You know that a major remodeling project is beyond your do-it-yourself ability, but where do you begin? How do you choose the team of experts that a major upgrade of an older home requires? How do you work with them to achieve the result that you want? How do you know what's feasible? What will it cost? How long will it take? How disruptive will it be?

As anyone who has completed a major home renovation project can report, the experience can be very stressful. Following a few simple guidelines can help you achieve a beautiful addition or home improvement that suits your personal style and meets your family needs without undue stress.

Plan Ahead

Before you contact an architect or contractor, you can begin by developing a remodeling wish list. Include all of the changes you would like to make. A wish list does not cost you anything, so there is no reason to place any limits on it—there will be plenty of time for that later. Think as broadly as possible and have fun doing it. Make it a family project. Possibilities might surface that had not originally occurred to you, or you may discover that your family's needs and desires are different from what you had assumed them to be.

As you move forward in the renovation process, you and your architect will refine this list into a written remodeling plan, or program. "Programming" is the first step of the architectural design process. A program is the tool that architects use to understand and confirm what the client wants before the actual design work begins. A well developed wish list gives you and your architect a great starting point for collaborative design, because it helps you to refine your thinking. Be as specific as you can. If you want a large eat-in kitchen with lots of light that opens into a new family room, make that an item on your wish list. Don't worry about *how* to do it; your architect will figure out how to transform your vision into reality. But knowing what you want and being able to communicate it clearly will make you a full partner in the design process.

Your wish list should also be as detailed as possible. Include your preferences of color and style, and for products or materials such as flooring, cabinets, plumbing fixtures, and so forth. If you can, make alternate selections of materials, appliances, or fixtures according to price.

You may find it difficult at times to put your ideas into words, or you may not have given much thought to a lot of details. Clippings from residential magazines are a great way to stimulate your thinking and supplement your wish list. Assemble a file of images and note what you like and *don't* like about each one. Make notes on the photos or in the margins to pass on to the architect with your wish list. Be blunt and brief: "love the wisteria arbor in this garden, but hate the Mediterranean style of the house;" or "we would like our house to feel welcoming with a big front porch like this one."

As you make your list, think about how you and your family use your home now and how you would like to use it in the future. Ask yourself how your current furnishings will fit into the new space, and what new ones might be needed. Contemplate future needs, such as safety and accessibility features that you might need as your family grows or as you age. Many accessibility features can be incorporated into newly-designed space unnoticeably. Door and faucet levers instead of knobs are easier for children, the physically-impaired, and even the able-bodied with an armful of groceries to operate. Shower curbs can often be eliminated. Consider conveniences such as additional electrical outlets or telephone and cable jacks that you might need for entertainment rooms and home offices. Keep your personal style in mind, and how you might incorporate it into your newly remodeled home.

The next step in making a wish list is to prioritize your wishes. Everyone has dreams that are bigger than their budget, but some items are always more important than others. First, divide your list into two major categories: those items you "must have" versus those items you would "like to have." Then, rank each item on both lists in order of importance or priority. A new family room and master bathroom might be "must have" items, but you might be willing to forego the new stone fireplace or the whirlpool tub. Much of the stress of a renovation project can be due to a sense that you have no control over escalating costs. The excitement of a renovation project often causes people—and often, their architects—to be overly optimistic about project costs. Defining your priorities early helps you decide the "relative worth" of each item before you even know what they cost, and serves as a constant reminder to you and your architect to consider cost throughout the design process. And if, despite your best joint efforts, the project still comes in over budget, making cuts will be much less agonizing, because you will have already given some thought to what you might cut, and in what order.

Keep your wish list and clippings together in a binder or common folder; having all of the information neatly organized in one place allows you to move forward with your project in an orderly manner, and helps to remind you of decisions you have made along the way.

Be Mindful of Your Neighbors

Remodeling your home will affect not only you and your family, it will also affect your neighbors. Construction will disrupt the daily neighborhood routine, and changes to your home will change the look of the neighborhood. The impact of things such as the height of a new second-story or the volume of a backyard addition on your immediate neighbors should be considered, and not merely out of consideration for them. If an addition looks out of place among other homes in the area, it may be harder to sell your home in the future. Or, if your home is deemed the "neighborhood gem" in a different price category from neighboring houses, it may be difficult to extract its full value at the time of sale. A successful addition will look natural and will not overwhelm the original house or neighborhood.

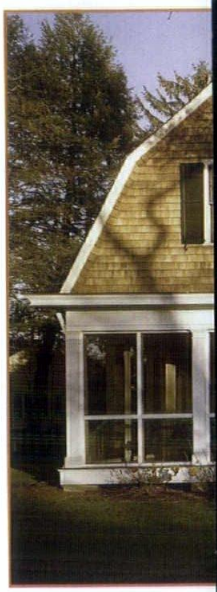
Construction noise and disruption may affect your neighbors as much as it affects you and your family, except that they cannot look forward to a wonderful new home after construction is over. A good deal of neighborhood opposition to renovation projects may be due to the "surprise factor" or a sense that people have no control over their environment. Thoughtful consideration and communication can help minimize conflicts. Contact your immediate neighbors individually and give them an overview of the project. If you belong to a neighborhood association or group, keep the association apprised of the status of the project, including estimated start and end dates, the time of day contractors will be working, and any construction activities that may disrupt the daily neighborhood routine. If contractors need to park on the street during the day, or if there will be a dumpster on the street, give your neighbors plenty of notice. Make certain that your contractor obtains any necessary permits.

If your project will require a variance, there is no point in withholding information from the neighbors affected, since they will have a right to the information anyway as part of the variance approval process. When you file for a variance, provide affected neighbors with copies of your variance application and keep them informed of hearing dates.

Budget Appropriately

Now comes the not-so-fun part—the budget. To get a rough idea of costs before you even speak with an architect, a good starting point is approximately $200 per square foot. This is a rough, rule-of-thumb figure, as no two remodeling projects are alike. Additions that increase the footprint of a house generally cost relatively more than adding a second or third floor, because of the cost of added foundations. New kitchens and baths cost relatively more than new family rooms.

Keep in mind that there are many areas in which budgets can fluctuate, and that products incorporated into any project can vary widely in cost, including doors and windows, cabinets, plumbing fixtures and fittings, countertops, and appliances. Maintain a continuous dialogue with your architect about alternative design and product selection options. For example, skylights in the attic might convert it into useful living space for a fraction of the cost of reconfiguring the roof with a dormer addition. In making these decisions, focus on the cost/quality ratio. Remodeling is a long-term investment. A good design and



Myers Residence, Kensington, Maryland, by GTM Architects. Top to Bottom: Front and rear elevations, after and before.

Kenneth Wyner Photography

high-quality building materials will be more durable and add greater value. Expensive, luxury materials or appliances may not, since these are often subject to changing trends.

You may also need to budget for changes in the cost of living during your remodeling project. For example, in a kitchen remodel, you will need to find an area where you relocate your refrigerator and microwave to prepare quick meals, and it is likely that you will eat out more often. If the remodel is large in scale, you may need to factor in the cost of boarding your pets, taking your children to daycare, packing and storing personal belongings or even renting a temporary home or staying in a hotel while the most disruptive work is being completed.

Despite your best planning efforts and the diligence of your architect and contractor, you can be certain that your project will have unplanned costs. Demolition may uncover unforeseen conditions, or the project may be delayed due to weather or other factors. For example, demolition of a wall may uncover water or insect damage, or building products may not be delivered on time. We recommend to our clients that they include a ten percent contingency in their project budgets to cover any unplanned costs.

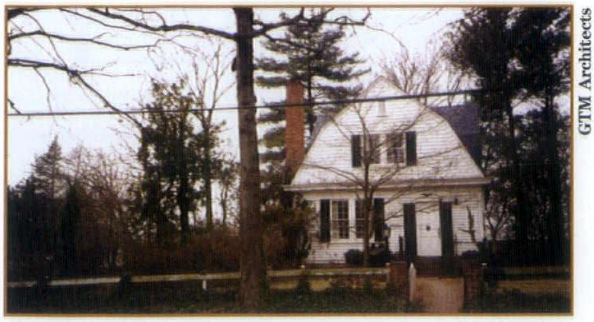
Choosing the Right Team for the Job

Kenneth Wyner Photography

Choosing the right architect and contractor are the most important decisions you will make. Interview a number of architects; ask about their specific experience with projects similar to yours, and ask them to review your project binder. Ask for references of previous clients, and check them. Choose the team based on talent, design orientation and technical expertise. You should have the sense that they have a good understanding of your project, your budget, and what you want to accomplish. If possible, tour projects they have completed. Make sure you are comfortable with the architect and team, as you will be working with them for an extended period of time.

The Washington Chapter/AIA maintains a Client Resource Center that is especially useful for residential clients. You can review portfolios of many architecture firms and develop a good sense of their work before even contacting them. There is no charge for using the Center. The Chapter also has very valuable and detailed information on its Web site, **www.aiadc.com**, about how to hire an architect. If you have never hired an architect, the Web site and the Client Resource Center are great places to start.

Often, architects will have a team of contractors with whom they prefer working. As you interview architects, ask if they have contractors they would recommend, or whether you will be solely responsible for finding the contractor. Contact prospective contractors, and begin checking references early; there is no need to wait until the designs are complete. Be certain to verify the licenses of the contractors with the state or local licensing board.



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The design process for any project goes through a number of formal phases: programming, schematic design, design development, and construction documents. Once you've entered into an agreement with your architect, ask for a detailed explanation of each of these phases, and what decisions you will be expected to make at each phase. Never hesitate to ask questions! Clients are not expected to know everything about design and construction, and most architects are very happy to help educate you. The design process often requires time and several meetings to make sure your needs are met.

GTM Architects

Communicate with all of the involved parties regularly; after all, this is your home. Obtain contact information for your designated project managers from the architect and the contractor, and develop a schedule to receive regular updates on the project. Regular communication reduces the likelihood of cost overruns or schedule changes, and provides a forum for you to voice concerns or affirm that the project is moving in the right direction.

Remodeling takes time and patience, but the more you plan ahead and take an active role, the more likely you will be pleased with the process and the results.

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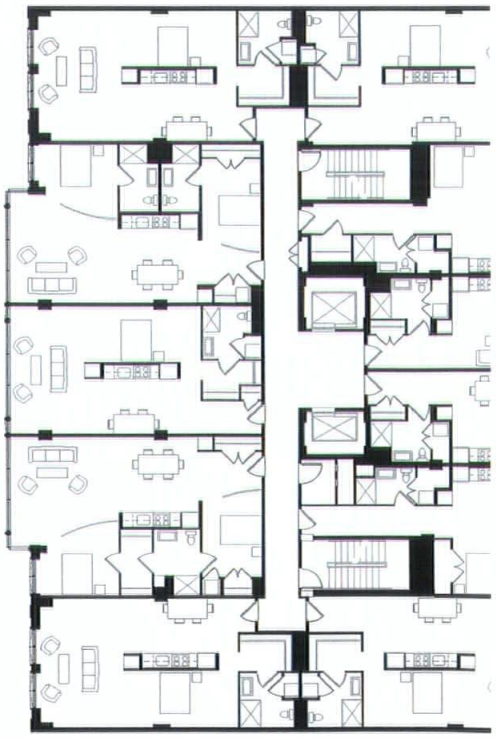
Architecture Ahead

At Home in the City

by L. Catherine Hader

Washington, DC has supported one of the hottest housing markets in the United States in recent years, with most of the demand being met by condominiums. Unlike the nation's other two hottest markets, South Florida and Las Vegas, which are experiencing record levels of speculative investment buying, demand for condos in DC has soared largely due to job creation and population growth. According to Delta Associates, an Alexandria, Virginia-based real estate advisory firm, in the 12-month period that ended in September 2005, the DC metropolitan area led the nation in job growth, with nearly 80,000 new jobs added to the region's payrolls. The job growth is mirrored in the region's condo purchase statistics: 70 percent of DC-area condominium units sold in 2005 were purchased by resident owners. Developers have responded eagerly to the market demand: Delta estimates that 47,000 units will come onto the local market in the next three years.

Changing lifestyle preferences are also a big factor in the demand for condos. Young professionals, empty nesters, and retirees increasingly are choosing convenience and amenities—proximity to mass transit, work, cafés, culture, and entertainment—over the maintenance, yard work, and long commuting time associated with single family homes. A larger market also means that developers can tailor their offerings to specific types of customers, just as automobile manufacturers offer a wide variety of models and styles. Three new signature projects that have recently broken ground exemplify this trend: The Alta at Thomas Circle, which is nearing completion for a Fall 2006 opening, and The Floridian and CityVista, both of which will be completed in 2007. Thoughtfully designed with owners and their communities in mind, they stand to enhance the character and vitality of their neighborhoods.



Cunningham + Quill Architects

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The Alta at Thomas Circle

At first glance, this mid-block building at 1133 14th Street, NW, could be mistaken for a sleek new office building; it fits that well among the commercial façades of 14th Street below Thomas Circle. Instead, 126 new residences are tucked behind a sheer glass veil in this new 13-story condominium building designed by **Cunningham + Quill Architects PLLC** for developers **PN Hoffman.**

In conceiving The Alta, the developers sought to target a specific subset of the condo market—Washington's young professionals who want to work, live, and play in the same area, at an affordable price. Too often in the DC market, "affordable" can mean an undesirable or remote location, poor design quality, cramped living space, or insufficient parking. For The Alta, Cunningham + Quill and PN Hoffman have given thoughtful consideration to the attributes of a home that this particular segment of the market values most, and have jettisoned conventional notions of "finished space" that drive up costs without adding any meaningful value. The architects have designed compact living spaces; 118 of The Alta's 126 units range from 475 to 995 square feet. These relatively small unit sizes are the key to holding down cost, but their open floor plans, efficient layout, and modern, minimalist detailing make the units feel much larger than they are. Expansive windows, exposed ductwork, and stone floors impart a contemporary, loft-like character to these single-floor units, while four levels of below-grade parking eliminate one of the principal stresses of urban living for homeowners in this segment of the market.

While there are many loft-style units available throughout the metropolitan area, there are very few, if any, condominium buildings specifically designed to deliver high quality design at a reasonable price. No other building on the market is quite like The Alta, but if the brisk pace of sales is any indication, the architects and developers have clearly struck a chord among young buyers. Its success is sure to spark a new "small size, high design" trend in condominium living not unlike the "boutique hotel" trend that has emerged in most major U.S. cities, including DC.

The Alta distinguishes itself not only through design and pricing, but also through sustainable features. Green roofs at the second level terrace and the 13th floor roof provide shelter from UV exposure and reduce runoff into the city's storm water systems. At the same time, they provide green space for the residents to enjoy. Inside, smart design of building systems, extensive use of renewable or recycled materials, as well as "raw" surfaces such as exposed concrete ceilings, further reduce the impact of this building on the environment. The mechanical and electrical systems have been configured and commissioned for maximum efficiency. The majority of the structural system uses concrete mixed with recycled material, and the arrangement of the living units brings maximum daylight into each space, reducing the need for artificial light. PN Hoffman has registered The Alta with the US Green Building Council and hopes to deliver the first LEED-certified condominium building to the DC market. And while it is not a "green" feature, per se, street-level retail fosters an urbane urban environment.

The Floridian

The name conjures visions of palm trees, aquamarine seas, and brightly-colored flowers, but The Floridian—a condominium in a sea of small businesses, row houses, industrial buildings, and high-rise residential buildings—draws its name from its address on Florida Avenue, NW. Still, those who approach The Floridian in search of an oasis will have no trouble finding a respite from the noise and energy of city life just north of the rapidly developing U Street corridor where Vermont Avenue, NW, terminates at Florida Avenue.

The design by architect **Eric Colbert and Associates, PC** for **Kady Group Builders/Developers** is meant to appeal to the urban dweller who wants nothing of traditional Washington style. Departing strikingly from the local vernacular of brick and mortar, each tower has its own distinctive color palette and character. Crisp colored metal panels clad the North Tower in prism gold, aged

Eric Colbert and Associates

Torti Gallas and Partners

copper, regal white, violet slate, and smoked gray, contrasting with the South Tower of precast concrete panels, steel, and corrugated metal. These exterior personalities carry through the interior, with the palette of the North Tower tending toward more colorful, more playful treatment, while the South Tower is cooler, more contemporary in tone.

At ground level, each tower has its own landscaped entrance. Portions of the North Tower's ground floor are enclosed in clear and etched glass, causing the base of the building to glow at night. The South Tower's glow emanates from the floor to ceiling glass of the residences, which provide expansive city views.

Together, the towers offer 118 dwelling units and underground garage parking. With 10-foot ceilings, open floor plans, and exposed ductwork, The Floridian offers spaciousness, modern style, and a new way to enjoy city living.

"These buildings capture the texture and dynamism of urban life while establishing a high-rise precedent for this up-and-coming neighborhood," says project architect **Ira Tattelman, AIA.** "They are distinctive for DC, and could be a discovery for a lot of people because they are much more contemporary than people are used to. We are very excited to see them go up."

CityVista

Two blocks east of the Washington Convention Center, CityVista will help complete the transformation of the long-desolate area of the city north of Massachusetts Avenue between Mount Vernon Square and Union Station— what some have begun referring to as the NoMa neighborhood. The project—a joint development of **Lowe Enterprises, Bundy Development Corporation,** and **CIM Group**—is sure to have a dramatic impact due to its sheer size. A low-density patchwork of neglected row houses, commercial buildings, and parking lots is rapidly giving way to new high-rise housing. CityVista will occupy nearly an entire city block, bringing a "fresh modern approach to architecture in the city," according to **Maurice Walters** of **Torti Gallas and Partners,** architects and master planners for the project.

Whether or not the new neighborhood moniker sticks, CityVista will become a focal point and catalyst for future growth, with public and private outdoor spaces, restaurants, and other retail establishments complimenting its 685 residential units. The amount and mix of retail is significant. It will fill the street and mezzanine levels and will include that vital retail element of urban living, a

Torti Gallas and Partners

55,000 square-foot grocery store, here conceived as an "urban lifestyle" Safeway. Shoppers will find the staples they expect—both prepared foods and fresh ingredients— but also other neighborhood conveniences such as a branch bank, a coffee shop, and a dry cleaner.

CityVista's 685 units are apportioned among three buildings, two of which will be condominiums, the third rental apartments. The buildings are arranged on the site to maximize both public and private open spaces. A landscaped public plaza opens to the corner of 5th and K Streets, while within the complex, residents will enjoy Vista Green—a private, open-air courtyard nearly one acre in size—and a rooftop pool and terrace.

"The L," designed by Torti Gallas, will be the first to be completed, a seven-story, 149-unit condominium building on the northeast corner of the site. Shortly thereafter "The K," also designed by Torti Gallas, will rise 12 stories and add 292 condominium units, while "The V," designed by **Michael Marshall Architecture** in joint venture with Torti Gallas, will complete the composition with 244 rental apartments in nine stories. The architects have expressed the contemporary urban spirit of CityVista with masonry and large expanses of glass, used in different patterns and combinations to differentiate among the three buildings.

With so much available open space within walking distance of the Federal Triangle, it was perhaps inevitable that this area would become the target of developers. The type of development that would occur was less predictable. The focus on residential development with supporting neighborhood retail, which would have seemed audacious or even foolhardy in this area 10 years ago, is becoming the standard formula for urban revitalization.

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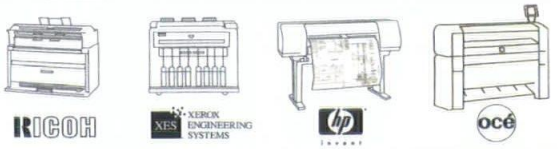

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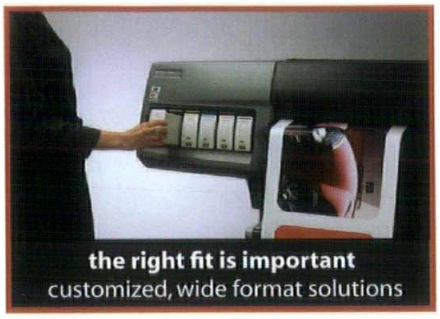

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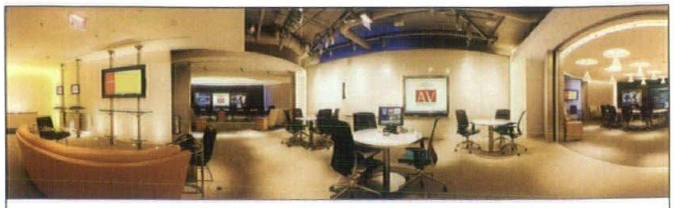

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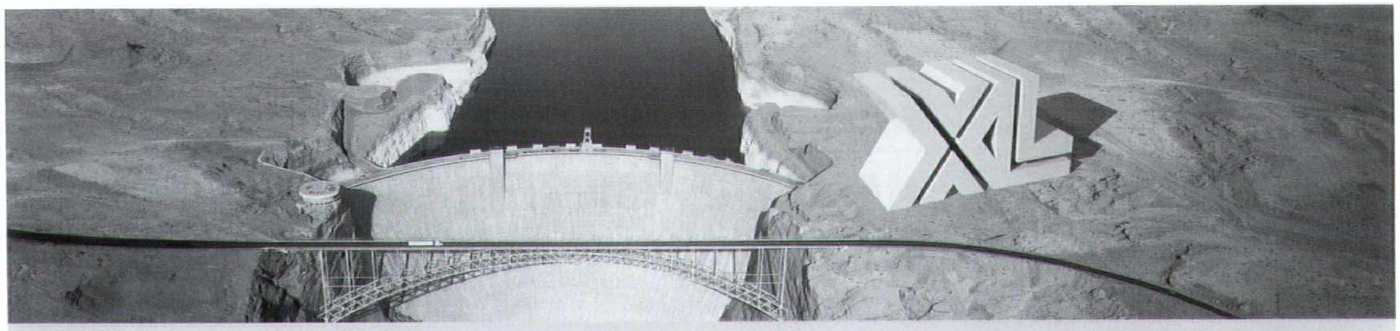

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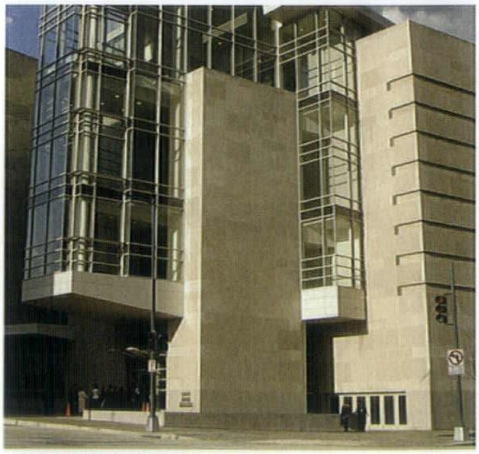

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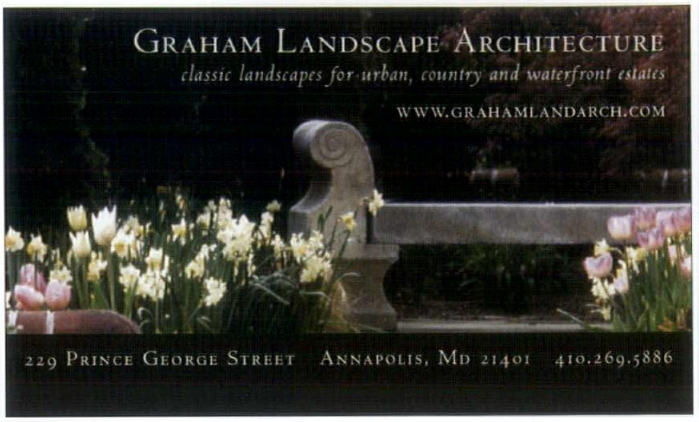
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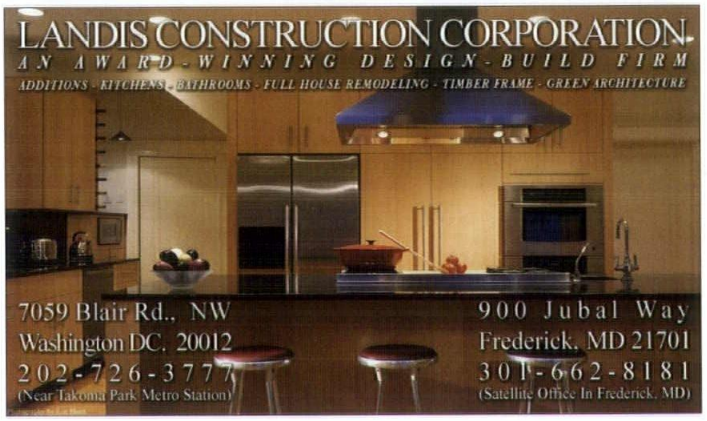
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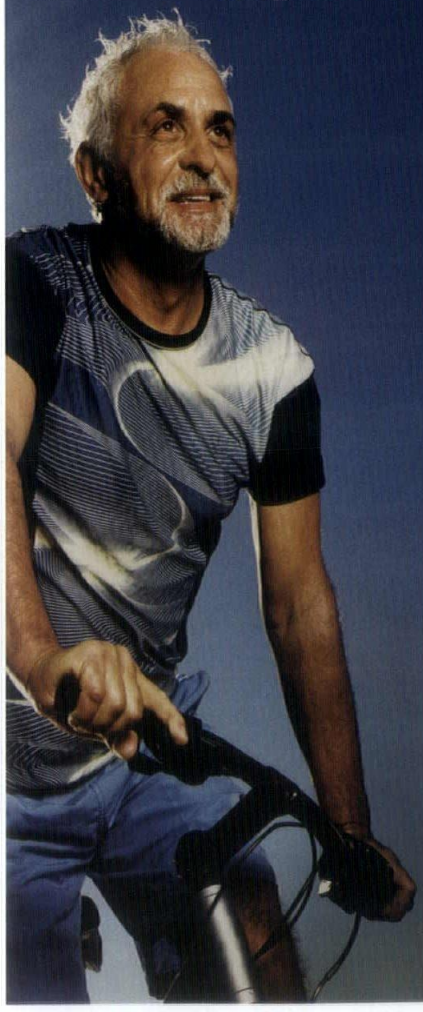

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DesignDC:

Technology and Trends Changing the Practice of Architecture

by Mary Fitch

In past issues of this magazine, you may have noted the handsomely designed advertisement for DesignDC (facing page), Washington's only architecture conference and tradeshow, to be held in July. A collaborative effort of the Washington Chapter/AIA and the Potomac Valley Chapter/AIA, DesignDC offers are architects the chance to network, attend seminars and workshops on the latest trends and technologies, and examine the latest building products and services.

Architects understand the value of the knowledge to be gained at DesignDC, but why should you—a design-savvy consumer—care whether your architect broadens his or her knowledge? The building process and construction process is in a constant state of change, and practitioners must continually stay informed in order to serve their clients. For example, the newest design technology, building information modeling, or "BIM," is increasingly allowing architects to approach design in an integrated, holistic way—the way architects are trained to think and work—and is helping to bridge the chasm between the design process and computer technology that developed 20 years ago with the emergence of computer-aided design (CAD), the technology that BIM is now replacing. BIM allows architects to spend less time mastering arcane computer commands and more time designing. It also allows them to develop design concepts to a much higher level of three-dimensional detail and realism earlier in the design process. While most of the benefits of BIM are realized on large, complex projects, savvy residential architects are exploiting the technology to communicate design concepts to clients in ways that would have been prohibitively expensive only a few years ago. There are five seminars on BIM at this year's DesignDC.

Sustainable or "green" design is also a hot DesignDC topic. From introductory seminars to a session focused on advanced green pricing strategies with a local contractor, architects will be able to choose from a selection of nine seminars on this growing area of practice. DesignDC will also feature the latest in design trends for airports, senior housing and the Washington National's new ballpark.

We are especially honored that the internationally-renowned architect **Moshe Safdie, FAIA,** will open the conference with a special keynote address on Wednesday evening, July 19. Safdie has had a major impact on modern design the world over. From his startling Habitat, designed for the Montreal Expo in 1967, to the recently finished and highly acclaimed Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum Memorial in Israel, Safdie has continually influenced and informed the practice of modern architecture. His Vancouver Public Library encouraged modern architects to look at libraries not just as a place to store books, but as gathering places in the city. Safdie is now designing his first two buildings in DC, the Peace Institute near the Lincoln Memorial and a federal office building on New York Avenue, NE. We look forward to hearing Mr. Safdie talk about his landmark projects, his thoughts on the practice of architecture in this new century, as well as his new work here in Washington. Readers of *ARCHITECTURE**DC*** have an exclusive opportunity to attend this fascinating lecture at a discounted price. Register at **www.aiadc.com/architecturedc** and receive $10 off the ticket price for the lecture and the reception that follows. Enjoy Mr. Safdie's brilliant lecture, rub elbows with architects from all over the region at the reception, and visit the tradeshow of all the latest products available to architects. Don't miss your chance to be part of Washington's premier design event.

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The Architect/Client Resource Center is a free public service of AIA/DC. If you are interested in hiring an architect but do not know where to begin, you can review the portfolios of the following Resource Center firms at your leisure in our conference room. Our staff is also available to answer general questions about hiring an architect as well as questions about individual firms. Even among architects who specialize in residential design, many develop specific areas of expertise or distinct aesthetic styles. We can help you identify the firms that are most likely to meet your particular needs. The Resource Center is available by appointment by calling **202.667.1798.** Additional helpful information is available on our Web site. Select "Hire an Architect" from the top of the menu at **www.aiadc.com.**

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